

Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



FOREIGN AGRICULTURE CIRCULAR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

★ OCT 25 1956 ★

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE August 27, 1956

FFVS 4-56

SPAIN: ANNUAL SEED REPORT 1955-56

SUMMARY

Forage seed production generally showed decreases in 1955 over 1954. For example, an estimated 2,024 thousand pounds of alfalfa seed was produced in 1955 compared with 2,108 thousand pounds in 1954. However, vegetable seed production generally showed increases in 1955 over 1954 while hybrid seed corn continued its rapid increase with an estimated 25 percent of the corn crop or about 247,100 acres being planted to hybrids in 1956.

The February 1956 freezes greatly reduced the seed production of lettuce, spinach, fodder beets, early peas, and cauliflower. As a consequence, relatively large imports of these seeds were made from Holland and France. Prices for these imported seeds were 50 percent above those of the previous year.

Seed stocks are generally very low or non-existent. Seed production is gradually being expanded and practices improved. Dodder (*cuscuta*) in legume seeds is still a major problem. Magnetic machines are used to remove it from the seeds.

For the most part, the international rules on seed testing are followed and observed. Spain does not have a seed law as such, but the imports are controlled through the granting of permits only for specified qualities of seeds. The same applies to exports.

Some seed officials have expressed the desire that Spain may be interested in buying some Ladino clover under Public Law 480 in the near future. The outlook for next season is mixed with a short crop of vegetable seeds forecast as a result of the freeze while, if the excellent moisture conditions continue, a normal crop of other seeds is predicted.

GENERAL

Spain has a considerable diversity of climate, topography, and soils. The average annual rainfall is approximately 20 inches. This limits interest to the dryland forage crops. In the irrigated areas, alfalfa, tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, orchard grass, and Ladino clover are produced. In the low rainfall area, wheatgrasses, rose and subterranean clover are the major forage plants.

The National Institute for the Production of Selected Seeds was formed in 1948 and controls all the seed production of cereals, horticultural and forage crops in Spain. The Institute controls an estimated 80 to 100 percent of the seeds. This varies from a low of 80 percent of the alfalfa to nearly a hundred percent for sugar beets and hybrid seed corn. The percentages for vegetable and forage crops is probably within this range.

Hybrid corn production is also under the Institute and originally three firms representing United States seed producers were in the business. However, because of the interest in hybrid corn seed there are now 10 firms. The big expansion has been in the newer corn growing areas, rather than in the older ones of northern Spain where the farms are small. Most of the corn produced in Spain is of the Dent type, although in the north and in the higher mountain areas Flint is still used. Corn is largely consumed by livestock.

A large number of American varieties of crops have been introduced for testing, some of them showing very favorable results. The National Research Institute of Agronomy has had charge of most of the testing which has been carried on in regional stations covering most of the principal types of farming areas.

The lack of foreign exchange makes it difficult to buy seeds from the United States. The National Institute for the Production of Selected Seeds is multiplying the stock seed of many standard commercial types and varieties on its own farms and then contracting with seedsmen and farmers for further multiplication. This is done under the supervision and control of the Institute's agronomists who apparently are maintaining good standards.

The Institute and the Research Service are also doing some multiplication work on their farms of the more promising varieties, and kinds not generally commercially available. Already a few selected species and varieties have been put into production.

During 1955 the following amounts of seeds, in thousand-pound quantities, were produced by the National Institute: Prairie brome 6, tall oat 1, smooth brome 1, alta fescue 2, alfalfa (Ranger and pilca butto) 1, bluegrama 1, perennial ryegrass (5 varieties) 3, California bur-clover 1, smilgrass 1, sub-clover (3 varieties) 1, rose clover 2, weeping lovegrass 1, bird vetch 4, common hairy vetch 3, San Rafael hairy vetch 1, and other grasses including crested, desert, and intermediate wheatgrasses, ladino clover, goat fescue, purple vetch, bromus stamineus, and orchard grass.

Spain has a number of regional zones of alfalfa that seem to be well adapted to the country and are being multiplied under the Institute's direction. This consists of selecting the fields from which seed will be taken as well as supervising, cleaning, and preparation of the seed. The regional name is given to such seed, which must be free of dodder and carry only a minimum of plantain and rumex. For domestic use the seed must be cleaned to 98 percent purity, for export 99 percent. It is unlikely that

Spain will provide a market for any appreciable quantities of United States varieties. Normally Spain exports alfalfa seed to Mexico and South America.

Spain has a native clover, *trifolium hirtum*, Rose Clover, which is an annual, and seems to offer more possibilities than the subterranean clover that is used elsewhere under similar rainfall conditions. It is being multiplied to increase the supplies of seed, which are intended to be used with Harding grass in the drier areas.

The 12 or 15 seedsmen licensed to produce seed by the Institute do a nation-wide business through retailers. Most of them seem to have good cleaning equipment and are interested in maintaining their connections with the Institute. However, they are all new to the seed business and have few concepts of operating as do United States seedsmen. They do not plan to have a carryover of seed at the end of the season, but also do not seem perturbed if they run short of supplying the demand.

Table 1: Production of Vegetable Seeds,
1953 through 1956

Kind of Seed	1953	1954	1955	1956
	<u>:1,000 pounds</u>	<u>:1,000 pounds</u>	<u>:1,000 pounds</u>	<u>:1,000 pounds</u>
Swiss Chard	5	5	5	4
Celery	1/	2	3	1/
Borage	1/	1/	2	2
Broccoli	1/	3	2	2
Cardoon	2	1/	2	1/
Onion	10	21	28	19
Milan sprouts	1/	5	3	3
Cauliflower	3	3	2	5
Endive	5	7	4	5
Spinach	22	28	50	34
Peas	247	478	665	427
Broad beans	420	231	490	596
Beans	667	944	988	784
Lettuce	11	11	11	9
Melon	6	6	10	5
Turnip	2	3	4	2
Cucumber	2	2	1/	1/
Leek	2	2	3	4
Radish	6	3	9	5
Beets	1/	1/	3	2
Cabbage	6	12	5	13
Watermelon	5	6	4	5
Tomato	1/	2	1/	2
Carrot	8	11	5	7
Other 2/	3	6	3	6

1/ Less than 1,500 lbs. 2/ Includes eggplant, squash, pumpkin, brussels sprouts, parsley and pepper.

Table 2: Estimated Production of Selected Seeds,
1953 through 1956

Grass Seeds	1953	1954	1955	1956
	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds
Alfalfa	1,823	2,109	2,018	2,690
Fescue	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	2
Ryegrass, perennial	18	21	18	50
Ryegrass, annual	-	-	-	28
Clover, berseem	161	137	244	342
Clover, white	<u>1/</u>	2	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>
Clover, crimson	19	20	28	-
Clover, alsike	113	2	<u>1/</u>	-
Clover, red	291	318	282	441
Other	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	6
Industrial Crops				
Sugar beets	6,832	8,521	4,302	5,842
Fodder Root Crops				
Cabbage	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>	4	<u>1/</u>
Sainfoin	134	120	185	287
Turnip	7	20	44	86
Sugarbeet	562	641	1,087	754
Fodder carrot	-	5	9	5

1/ Less than 500 pounds.

Table 3: Alfalfa Seed Exports by Countries of Destination,
1954 and 1955

Country of Destination	1954	1955
	1,000 Pounds	1,000 Pounds
Brazil	496	1,323
Holland	66	-
Italy	441	-
Mexico	5,820	4,683
United States	11	-
Portugal	-	7
Uruguay	-	225
Venezuela	-	2
Total	6,834	6,240

Table 4: Alfalfa Seed Production,
1954 and 1955

Provinces	1954	1955
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Murcia	83	93
Alicante	85	55
Valencia & Alicante	34	33
Gerona	24	29
Lerida	96	95
Zaragoza	1,041	957
Huesca	-	26
Navarra	1,421	1,118
Navarra & Logrono	604	515
Navarra; Logrono & Alava	310	176
Logrono	349	328
Valladolid & Palencia	88	44
Zamora	132	88

Table 5: Selected Seed Exports,
1954 and 1955 1/

Kind of Seed	1954	1955
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Onion	4	4
Beans	4	-
Peas	3	1
Red Clover	11	-
Berseem	22	-
Vetch	1	2
Esparsette	2	-
Fodder Beets	9	37
Sugar Beets	5,512	-
Broad Beans	-	3
Milan	-	<u>2/</u>

1/ Countries of destination were France, Mexico, Portugal, Germany, Brazil, and Morocco.

2/ Less than 500 pounds.

Table 6: Imports of Selected Seeds,
1954 and 1955

Kind of Seed	1954	1955
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Onions	-	1
Spinach	7	24
Peas	37	67
Beans	6	-
Lettuce	3	-
Leek	1	1
Carrot	3	-
Turnip	20	-
Bird Vetch	-	22
Bent Grass	-	1
Orchard Grass	-	1
Fescue	<u>1/</u>	1
Bluegrass	1	2
Perennial Ryegrass	12	42
Ladino Clover	-	2
Sugar Beet	305	61

1/ Less than 500 pounds.

Table 7: Canary Islands: Onion Seed Exports by
Country of Destination, 1954 and 1955

Country of Destination	1954	1955
	<u>1,000 pounds</u>	<u>1,000 pounds</u>
Dominican Republic	1	1
Venezuela	17	18
Brazil	9	11
United States	10	6
Costa Rica	2	1
Cuba	3	1
United Kingdom	<u>1/</u>	<u>1/</u>
Total	42	38

1/ Less than 500 pounds.